

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, IR
SUBJ: EMPRESS SUPPORTS LIBERALIZATION OF EDUCATION

1. LOCAL PRESS HAS REPRINTED EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW ORIGINALLY APPEARING IN DUTCH MAGAZINE "ELSEVIER". MUCH OF ARTICLE SEEMS TO BE REITERATION OF THE HARD-WORKING EMPRESS'S BUSY DAILY ROUTINE. EXCERPTS STRESS HER COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF IRANIAN LIFE AND PROVIDE AN UP-DATE ON HER REACTION TO CURRENT FERMENT TAKING PLACE WITHIN CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF IRANIAN POPULATION.

2. REFLECTING A WIDESPREAD CONCERN OF INTELLECTUALS AND CONSERVATIVE CLERGY WITH CULTURAL CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN IRAN THE EMPRESS EMPHASIZED THAT MATERIAL POSSESSIONS ALONE CANNOT ENSURE HAPPINESS. CONTRASTING THE RURAL PEASANTRY AS "LIVING A RICH, HUMAN LIFE" WITH THOSE IN URBAN CENTERS "WHO HAVE BECOME RICH AND SPEND A GREAT DEAL" SHE WARNED THAT THE LATTER "MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DIGEST THESE RAPID CHANGES".

3. EMPRESS IS QUOTED AS ATTACKING "BUREAUCRATIC-MINDED AND CONSERVATIVE ACADEMICS" WHO IMPLEMENT "EXTREMELY STRICT AND BUREAUCRATIC ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AT

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OUR UNIVERSITIES". SHE STRESSED THAT THESE ACADEMICS MUST BECOME MORE RESPONSIVE AND "MORE FREEDOM" MUST BE GIVEN TO THE UNIVERSITIES. REFERRING TO THE FACT THAT MANY IRANIANS WHO STUDY ABROAD DO NOT RETURN HOME, THE EMPRESS NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD LIKE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE UNIVERSITY TRAINING FOR THE 50,000 STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD.

4. COMMENT: PORTION OF INTERVIEW WHICH APPEARED HERE IS
REAFFIRMATION OF EMPRESS'S WELL KNOWN VIEWS--WHICH ARE
THOUGHT TO BE SOMEWHAT MORE LIBERAL THAN THOSE OF THE SHAH.
THESE PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS HAVE
BEEN EFFECTIVE IN PROJECTING A SOMEWHAT INDEPENDENT STANCE
BY THE EMPRESS AND IN BURNISHING HER IMAGE AS A HARDWORKING,
CONCERNED, "MODERN" MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY. THEY
PROJECT CONCERN ON THE PART OF THE ROYAL FAMILY FOR THE
HUMAN PROBLEMS THAT RESULT FROM IRAN'S RAPID, OFTEN
HECTIC AND FRUSTRATING PACE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
SOCIAL CHANGE.

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